

**Summary Minutes
Seed Program Advisory Committee
Ridpath Hotel, Spokane
Monday, November 14, 2005**

IN ATTENDANCE:

Seed Program Advisory Committee Members:

Fawad Shah, WSDA Seed Program
Victor Shaul, WSDA Seed Program
Jerry Robinson, Washington State Crop Improvement, Foundation Seed Service
Keith Pfeifer, Washington State Crop Improvement
Doug Boze, Washington State Crop Improvement
Kurt Braunwart, Progene
Rich Gilbert, Rainier Seed

Washington State Department of Agriculture Staff

Bob Gore, Assistant Director
Nancy Hartshorn, Laboratory Supervisor
Bob Fay, Seed Inspection Supervisor
Joyce Little, Office Support Supervisor

Guests

Orlin Reinbold, Landmark Seed
Craig Teel, Cenex Harvest States
Greg Lowry, Idaho Crop Improvement
Robert Stewart, California Crop Improvement
John Kugler, WSU Extension
Dave Beach, Connell Grain Growers
Dana Herron, Connell Grain Growers
Robert Wieldraayer, Klompen Farms
Val Iverson, Saddle Mountain Supply
David Johnson, Jacklin Seed Company
Michelle Ward, grower

MINUTES:

Operational Review

Fawad Shah opened the meeting by welcoming members and guests. Following introductions Fawad outlined the agenda for the meeting and spoke briefly on the success of the open house held by the Seed Program in March of this year. Fawad explained the purpose of the audit assessments held earlier this year and explained that the intent of the Seed Program was to help seed companies comply with established rules by pointing out violations and giving them ample time to correct them. He explained that the average turn-around time for testing in the lab this season was 3-4 days for grasses and 2-3 days for grain. Fawad spoke briefly on the success of the outsourcing provided for Oregon State University Seed Lab during this harvest season. He explained the agreement with BASF for bioassay testing of Clearfield wheat and what processes were taken to obtain certification for that testing. Fawad highlighted some of the training that Seed Program personnel participated in this past year. He spoke briefly on the seed lab accreditation progress. White cockle found in timothy seed was another agenda item to be discussed and Fawad explained the seed program's role. He spoke briefly on Pure

Harvest, what it can provide on-line, the cost to the program and what enhancements are planned in the near future to better serve the seed industry. Fawad talked about the poster the seed program will be displaying for the first time and the thoughts behind its creation. Fawad talked about the success of his visits to industry and his plans to continue with them. He explained that the intent of these visits is to listen to any questions or concerns of the seed industry in order to better serve them. Fawad announced that Nancy Hartshorn, seed lab supervisor, has been asked to serve on the rules committee for the Association of Official Seed Analysts. Fawad talked about the seed lab's current involvement with the AOASA purity committee and announced that Victor Shaul has been asked to take the chairmanship position on the Northwest referee committee. Fawad serves as associate editor of the Seed Technology Journal and also serves as a research associate for the Society of Commercial Seed Technologists. Fawad discussed the financial picture of the program explaining that the fund balance as of September 2005 was a positive \$91,125.81. Fawad announced that all bean windrow inspections were completed within 48 hours after notification as well as all official sampling requests within that time. Fawad talked about the increased efficiency brought about by the use of the six GPS units utilized by the field inspection staff. He commented on the fact that tag orders are completed within two days of request and that the majority of phyto certificate requests are filled within two days. Fawad briefly discussed in-house proficiency testing of our seed analysts and the accuracy of our lab reports. He then asked for any questions. Jerry Robinson inquired about the time frame for Clearfield testing. Victor replied that testing time for a Clearfield sample is 13-15 days once it is started. Nancy assured that this test is begun as soon as possible depending on what day of the week the sample is received.

Workload Volumes

Fawad then gave an update on the seed lab. He announced that this season has shown a 5.4% increase in sample volume and also an increase in the number of tests performed. Kurt Braunwart inquired as to how the fund balance is determined by the figures shown on the report. Fawad, Victor and Bob Gore gave insight to the report and how to better interpret it. Bob explained that the fund balance is based on what money is received not what is outstanding. Kurt asked where the program expects to be financially by the end of this year. Discussion followed on the fund balance, what the program is striving for and why.

Customer Outreach

The next item for discussion was the open house and what the feeling was about this type of event. Fawad asked for direction on whether we should host another open house or go in another direction. Discussion followed on the event, the time of year to have it and it's worth. Rich Gilbert supported the open house and thought the program should host at least one more for those who were unable to attend this year. Discussion followed on the best time of year to have another open house. Fawad mentioned that November might better accommodate the industry due to spring planting. Orlin Reinbold suggested that a seed school would be a good thing to pursue both for the lab and the field. Kurt suggested that perhaps alternating events from year to year would provide an opportunity for all aspects of industry to participate in things that pertain to their particular needs. Fawad suggested that we hold one more open house and then have further discussion at next year's meeting on what industry would like us to pursue.

Seedling Inspection Fees

Fawad then discussed the current seedling inspection fees. The fee for a seedling application was raised from \$23.12 to \$30.00 effective July 1, 2005. At the same time a seedling inspection fee was enacted. The fee for the seedling inspection is \$50.00 per field. These fees were recommended by an Ad Hoc committee in order for the seed program to help recover the actual cost of doing the seedling inspection and approved at a public hearing.

Regulatory Activities

Fawad discussed the current regulatory activity by the program. He stated that we have recently sampled and tested every timothy lot available due to the white cockle issue. Victor noted that out of all the lots of timothy that were sampled only one lot contained white cockle. Victor stated that the company involved was contacted and the problem was resolved. He stated that we also found a few minor labeling violations and are working with the companies to correct those. Orlin discussed the probability of finding a contaminant if enough seed is inspected and suggested that perhaps a tag similar to a sod tag might work for timothy. Victor agreed stating that the particular lot that contained white cockle had been tested eleven times. Dana Herron inquired as to what the minimum sample size of timothy is for testing and suggested testing a larger quantity perhaps 50 grams instead of ten. Victor stated that a one-gram purity with a 10-gram noxious is minimum for AOSA.

Seed Arbitration Committee

The next item for discussion was the mandatory arbitration requirement enacted in 1992. Bob Gore asked for input as to how useful arbitration is and how it is viewed by industry. He explained that the process is very costly and asked what benefits were derived by industry. The general consensus was that the current arbitration requirement is beneficial due to the fact that the committee understands the industry and can better evaluate the facts presented. Discussion followed on how the cost issue might be resolved. Bob stated that he appreciated the input and should the number of arbitration cases increase the department would have to pursue ways to recover the cost.

Crucifer Rule Proposal

Victor then gave an update on the status of the crucifer quarantine. He explained that the department received a petition for rule making from the Puget Sound Seed Growers Association. The basis of the petition was to create a rule that would protect seed growers in western Washington from Black leg and Black rot and make wild radish and black mustard a restricted noxious weed. In response a committee was formed. As a result the quarantine was developed for six western Washington counties requiring that seed offered for sale be tagged indicating quarantine compliance. Victor stated that the quarantine proposal was scheduled for public hearing on December 6th in Mt. Vernon and December 9th in Moses Lake. This quarantine was proposed due to the large increase in oil crops expected in western Washington.

Alfalfa Dormancy Rule Proposal

Victor then spoke about the alfalfa dormancy rule change proposal. He stated that inquiries have been received from seed companies working with growers in the Touchet-Walla Walla alfalfa area asking that we modify our rules to clarify land requirements for alfalfa dormancy. Victor stated that the present rules, stating that alfalfa seed of a northern dormancy cannot follow alfalfa seed of a southern dormancy ratings and vice versa, are too vague. This request would model our rules after the rules that Idaho has adopted; namely that no more than four points difference can be on the land rating for land history of one crop following another. Another proposal is that an additional year between seed fields would be required for fields that have not been planted in cultivated rows. Victor stated that the seed program will contact all known alfalfa production people to give them a chance to respond to these proposals. Greg Lowry stated that they have had the proposed rule in effect for several years and it has worked well.

Squirreltail Fescue

Victor brought up for discussion the fact that a large amount of squirreltail fescue has been found in samples recently. Squirreltail fescue can easily be mistaken for rattail fescue that is prohibited in sod quality and has been found in several Kentucky bluegrass lots. Victor provided pictures of the two plants and stated that in the seedling stage they are basically identical. Both

plants are *Vulpia* species so Victor asked if the turfgrass people would want to pursue changing the sod rules to read *Vulpia* species instead of listing only rattail fescue. The consensus was that we should review the sod rules. Victor stated that this could be done at the same time that we review the alfalfa rules.

Pure Harvest

Victor stated that interest in the Pure Harvest lab reporting system continues to increase. One new feature available over the last year was the e-mailing of lab reports. Victor stated that most companies are using this as a way to carbon copy the lab results to other companies and are no longer asking for faxed copies. He noted that 73 companies are accessing data over the web and approximately 60 are receiving regular e-mails. At this time three companies have gone totally paperless. Another new feature available this season is the availability of field inspection results over the web. Victor reported that the programmer is currently working on the addition of phytosanitary field inspection results on Pure Harvest. Fawad pointed out that you must subscribe to the program to be able to view the results and only your own results are accessible. He noted that there is no charge for stakeholders to use the Pure Harvest website.

Lab Accreditation

Nancy gave an update on seed lab accreditation. She reported that in July she attended training at Iowa State University presented by Andy Anders, Senior consultant for Iowa State Industrial Research and Services. The objective of the training was to give attendees a good understanding of how accreditation works and to help them work through the process. Nancy stated that Canada has accepted the USA-ASL accreditation and any labs that have this accreditation will be able to ship into Canada without further testing. Currently the accreditation will only cover purity and germination with other tests to come later. Requirements for accreditation include a quality manual, a procedures manual, work instructions, records and document control, and records of how the lab receives tests and identifies samples in a manner that meets the requirements of ASL. Nancy stated that currently we are working on work instruction for all areas of the program that deal with purity and germination and individuals are being assigned special projects that relate to the areas for which they are responsible.

WSCIA Fee Increase Proposal

Keith Pfeifer reported that WSCIA has requested a fee increase for the 2006 crop year in accordance with the fiscal growth factor for the state of 2.8%. He stated that field inspection fees would go up 8 cents an acre and final certification fees will go up one-half a cent per cwt.

White Cockle In Timothy Seed Issue

The next item discussed was the white cockle issue. John Kugler stated he strongly opposes the request made to the department to downgrade white cockle in timothy seed from prohibited to restricted noxious. He stated that he was also speaking for Jerry Janke, of the Grant County noxious weed control board and others such as the Kittitas County Hay Association and growers in Kittitas County who also are opposed to this action. Fawad explained the role of the Department and how the hearing process is developed and decided. Bob explained that this would be an open public hearing. Discussion followed on the issue by Robert Wieldraayer on the need for high quality timothy seed. Orlin gave a comparison of the timothy problem with the problems faced by the sod industry. Victor commented that one of the topics he will discuss at the Kittitas County Hay Growers Association meeting is developing a test similar to the sod quality exam for timothy hay where more grams of seed would be examined.

General Discussion

Kurt asked about the criteria for addressing the seed certification rules and how that process works. Victor stated that the rules are reviewed on a scheduled basis.

Kurt also asked if the seed inspectors were disinfecting their boots when inspecting trial ground beans. Victor stated that this should be being done and Fawad stated we will make sure it happens. The question was raised as to whether the increase in our sample numbers was mostly contributed to outsourcing. Fawad stated that he felt that most of the increase was due to an increased number of common samples being submitted and the fact that we have received samples from three new California companies in addition to the outsource samples.

Fawad adjourned the meeting by thanking everyone for attending. Meeting was adjourned at 4:00.

Note: Minutes available on line at <http://agr.wa.gov/inspection/seedinspection/default.shtml>,